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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KATHMANDU 000512

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: FORMER PM DAHAL TELLS A/S BLAKE MAOISTS ARE
COMMITTED TO PEACE

REF: A. KATHMANDU 461

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 164

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Jeffrey Moon. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Maoist chairman and former Prime Minister Pushpa Dahal told visiting Assistant Secretary Robert Blake on June 12 that his party is committed to the peace process and to drafting the constitution on time. The former Prime Minister spelled out the Maoists' goals for the peace process, including for integration of Maoist combatants, and for the constitution. Dahal described the transformation his party has undergone since the "People's War" as miraculous and said he is continuing to transform the party. He claimed its conversion to multiparty democracy genuine. Assistant Secretary Blake explained that before the United States could lift the terrorist designations on the Maoists, they will have to renounce violence, end violence by the Maoist Young Communist League, participate constructively in the peace process and address the remaining open issues stemming from attacks on U.S.-affiliated persons and a U.S. facility during the insurgency. End Summary.

Maoists Committed to Peace Process, New Constitution

[1](#)2. (C) In a meeting on June 12 with visiting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Robert Blake, Maoist chairman and former Prime Minister Pushpa Dahal stressed that his party is committed to the peace process, and intends to be actively involved in drafting Nepal's new constitution. Dahal said that both of these issues are the result of the Maoists' agenda and the Maoists refuse to be derailed in completing them. Nepalis care about the peace process. Likewise, the drafting process needs to be finished within the prescribed time frame. Despite problems, the Maoist chairman noted, there is a continuous dialogue and debate among and within the parties on next steps. Everyone, he stated, is trying to reach a consensus. Dahal added that Nepal requires the support of the international community, including the United Nations and the United States. Assistant Secretary Blake emphasized the importance of Maoist engagement and the need by the Maoists and the other parties to set aside party interests and work together for the

national interest.

Peace Process and Maoist Combatants

13. (C) The former Prime Minister implied that the peace process failed to make more progress because the Maoist government was brought down prematurely. His government tried to move ahead. It established the Special Committee on Supervision, Integration and Rehabilitation of Maoist Combatants, and its Technical Committee. The Technical Committee visited some of the cantonments. Dahal noted that he set a deadline of completing the integration process by July 15, a deadline which would have been possible. The Maoist chairman claimed that his party never said all of its 19,600 verified combatants should be integrated into the Nepal Army. The party's goal is that a maximum 5-7,000, "not a large number," be integrated. Dahal volunteered that he is willing to continue chairing the Special Committee, if asked creating a more conducive atmosphere for integration. When asked if the ex-People's Liberation Army fighters would serve loyally in the NA, Dahal insisted they would. They would no longer be part of the Maoist army. The former Prime Minister remarked that his party wants the combatants to become professionalized. At the same time, the Maoists want to see the NA, traditionally loyal to the "feudal" monarchy, democratized.

Role of the Army Chief, Issue of Disqualified

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14. (C) Dahal said that Chief of Army Staff Rookmangut Katawal in particular is very traditional. Admittedly, under his leadership, the NA did not resist the removal of the monarchy and the declaration of the republic. That gave a positive signal unlike the Army's role in the crackdown during the 2006 People's Movement. The former Prime Minister said he tried unsuccessfully to change Katawal's behavior. Dahal indicated that his effort to "accelerate" the process of democratization of the NA helped bring down his own government in May. With respect to the 4,000 minors and other disqualified in the camps, the Maoist chairman replied that the answer is to give them suitable "packages," including vocational training. The UN Development Program is prepared to help.

Drafting the Constitution, Federal Models

15. (C) The former Prime Minister stated that the Maoists have not disturbed the Constituent Assembly in drafting the new constitution. One of the Maoist-chaired committees was among the first to present its concept paper for debate. He also argued that the differences between the parties can be overcome. All the parties agreed to multiparty democracy, human rights and a federal system. The Maoists want a federal state based primarily on ethnicity. The other major parties had different ideas. They want a federal model based largely on geography. The Maoists want a presidential system. In his party's view, Nepal needs a powerful central government to unite the country, especially in a federal system. Others envision a continuation of the existing Westminster system. Most of the parties favored a bicameral legislature at the center with one house for the regions or states and one based on population.

Maoist Transformation

16. (C) Dahal remarked that four years earlier the Maoists were in the jungle leading the "People's War." But then the party entered into the peace process and the situation evolved to where the Maoists led the country's government for nine months. These were historical and miraculous

developments. Naturally, there were twists and turns, but the Maoists as a party have changed. The decision to embrace the peace process and multiparty democracy came after a serious debate within party ranks. The Maoists came to understand that other revolutionary movements failed because they did not accept multiparty democracy. Dahal said he knows that many people continue to have suspicions about the Maoists' intentions, but he has done his best to allay those fears, including in his speech to the UN General Assembly in New York in 2008. The Maoist chief admitted that his party wanted to seize power, but it wanted to do so through the ballot box. His dream is that the Maoists would win a majority in the next general election. He cited the results in the CA by-elections in April as evidence that his party's popularity was increasing. (Note: The Maoists won 3 of the 6 races.) The former PM added fears that the Maoists would win a majority if they continued in government led other parties to bring down the Maoist-led coalition.

A/S Blake's Challenge to the Maoists

17. (C) Amb. Blake challenged Dahal to prove his party's commitment to multiparty democracy by renouncing violence, including ending violence by the Maoist Young Communist League (YCL). The Maoist chairman responded that some level of violence is normal for Third World countries like Nepal, but claimed that the YCL has already changed. When pressed, he conceded that the YCL might be involved in some local-level disputes. However, he said the Youth Force (the militant youth wing of the Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist or UML) is also to blame. All of Nepal's major parties, including the Nepali Congress and the UML,

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have come out of armed struggles. The Maoist party is simply the last one to go through that process. A/S Blake replied that the Maoists were the largest party, so what they did matters.

Lifting the U.S. Terrorist Designations

18. (C) The Assistant Secretary listed four steps that the Maoists would have to take before the U.S. could take the Maoists off the Terrorist Exclusion List and the Specially Designated Global Terror list. First, they need to renounce the use of terrorism and violence. Dahal's statement when he was PM condemning the Mumbai terror attacks was not sufficient. Second, they needed to reform the YCL. Third, they need to address U.S. concerns about the killing of two Embassy guards and the bombing of the American Center in Kathmandu during the Maoist insurgency. The Maoist chairman appeared to be unfamiliar with the bombing of the American Center, but he responded that he authorized senior Maoist leader Barsha Man Pun to address these issues to the satisfaction of the Embassy. (See Ref B on the last round of talks between the Deputy Chief of Mission and Pun.) Amb. Blake and Charge d'Affaires Randy Berry explained that we still expect the Maoists to make an admission of guilt to the families of the guards and to the National Human Rights Commission. Lastly, the Maoists need to remain engaged in the peace process. It is now up to the Maoists to act.

U.S. Public Stance on Maoists

19. (U) At a June 12 press conference at the conclusion of his visit, journalists asked A/S Blake about the political role of the Maoists and the U.S. government's designation of the Maoists as terrorists. A/S Blake stated that the Maoists had made a great deal of progress toward becoming a mainstream political force and emphasized the importance of the Maoists remaining engaged in the democratic process. He urged the Maoists to work constructively to achieve peace in Nepal. With regard to the terrorist designation, he stated that

factors the United States would take into consideration included whether the Maoists renounced violence and terrorism, ceased the violent activities of the Young Communist League, and worked to support the peace process. When asked when the terrorist designation might be removed, A/S Blake replied that when Maoists would take the necessary steps was for the Maoists to decide.

Comment

¶10. (C) While the Maoists have no doubt undergone a significant transformation in recent years, they have only themselves to blame for the continued skepticism about their commitment to peace and multiparty democracy. While Dahal may lay most of the blame for his government's fall on other parties, it was his party's failure to maintain the confidence of its coalition partners over the Nepal Army issues that was the coalition's downfall. The Maoist chairman may regard the integration of 5-7,000 Maoist combatants into the Nepal Army as not many, but post is doubtful other major parties will share that view. It is good that the former Prime Minister is sanguine that the parties can resolve their differences over the constitution, but the Maoist-inspired agitation in the streets of Kathmandu and many outlying districts and its continued obstruction of the Assembly's parliamentary work cannot help but impair the CA's ability to debate their difference and reach the necessary compromises. The YCL certainly has no monopoly on the use of violence for political ends, but it has not yet been reformed as completely as Dahal claims. Pun is the right person to address the legacy of Maoist violence against U.S. interests during the insurgency -- if the Maoist leadership has the will to act. In response to A/S Blake's remarks at the press conference, C.P. Gajurel, the head of party's foreign department and a noted hardliner, condemned

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the U.S. conditions as "unacceptable."

¶11. (U) Assistant Secretary Blake cleared this message.
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